

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8594

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 6568

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFRO, IS LE XF

SUBJECT: PROBABLY ISRAELI REACTION TN INTRODUCTION INTO LEBANON
OF PAN-ARAB FORCE

REF:(A) JIDDA 6892(B) STATE 244360(C) CAIRO 10239

1. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT ISRAEL WOULD TAKE VERY
DIM VIEW OF INTRODUCTION INTO LEBANON OF AN INTER-ARAB
FORCE. WE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT THE MOVE WOULD BE CON-
SIDERED "INTOLERABLE," IF BY THAT IS MEANT IT WOULD
PROVOKE AN AUTOMATIC ISRAELI MILITARY REACTION.

2. PRESENT ISRAELI CONCERN ABOUT LEBANESE SITUATION
HAS TWO SEPARATE BUT RELATED ASPECTS. FIRST IS ISRAELI
DESIRE TO MAINTAIN MILITARY STATUS QUO ON NORTHERN FRONT.
CURRENT DEPLOYMENT OF ISRAELI FORCES ASSUMES VIRTUAL ABSENCE
OF ANY CONVENTIONAL THREAT FROM LEBANON, THEREBY FREEING
IDF TO CONCENTRATE ON WHAT IS SEEN AS VERY REAL SYRIAN THREAT.
ANY CHANGE WHICH MIGHT MEAN NEED TO DEFEND AGAINST A POSSIBLE
ATTACK ACROSS THE LEBANESE BORDER ITSELF COULD WELL TRIGGER
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MILITARY INTERVENTION, IN PAST THIS CONCERN HAS CENTERED ON

PROSPECT OF LARGE-SCALE SYRAIN FORCE BEING INTRODUCED INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON. BUT WE BELIEVE ISRAELI WOULD BE EQUALLY CONCERNED IN THE CASE OF A PAN-ARAB FORCE, IF DEPLOYMENT, COMPOSITION, AND STRENGTH WRE PERCEIVED TO CONSITUTE THREAT TO FLANK OF IDF FORCES FACING SYRIA.

3. SECOND ASPECT OF ISRAELI CONCERN IS POSSIBLE DISINTEGRATION OF CHRISTIAN POSITION WITHIN LEBANON TO POINT THAT, AS SEEN HERE, IT WOULD BE ONLY A MATER OF TIME BEFORE LEBANON BECAME FULL-FLEDGED CONFRONTATION STATE. IN SUCH CASE, HOWEVER, WE FIND IT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO PREDICT ISRAELI REACTION, ON ONE HAND, LONG-TERM EFFECT ON STATUS QUO OF NORTHER BORDER WOULD BE SAME. ON OTHER HAND, ISRAELIS MUST KNOW THAT THEIR INTEVENTION IN CONTEXT OF DISINTEGRATION OF CHRISTIAN POSITION WOULD LIKELY ONLY HASTEN THAT DISINTEGRATION. IN CASE OF INTRODUCTIN OF PAN-ARAB FORCE INTO AREA OTHER THAN NEAR SOUTHERN BORDER, THREFORE, ISRAELIS WOULD BE PRIMARILY INTERESTD IN ITS COMPOSITION, MISSION, AND DEGREE TO WHICH ITS ARRIVAL HAD APPROVAL OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP. EVEN SO, IF FORCE WERE DEPLOYED SOLEY TO PREVENT VIOLENCE IN URBAN AREAS WE DOUBT IF ISRAELI COUNTER-MEASURE WOULD BE MUCH MORETHAN VOCAL.

4. IT WILL BE NOTED THAT COMMON ELEMENT IN ISRAELI PERCEPTION OF SERIOUSNESS OF SITUATION IN EACH OF ABOVVE TWO CASES IS COMPOSITION OF ANY ARAB INTERVENTAION FORCE. ISRAEL WOULD PROBABLY REACT MORE MODERATELY IF FORCE WRER COMPOSED LARGELY OF SAUDIS, JORDANIANS, AND MOROCCANS, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT IF IT WERE HEAVILY DOSED WITH COMPONENT FROM THE MORE RADICAL ELEMENT OF THE ARAB WORLD.
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